

Greetings,

I am a musician who's been involved with indie bands gaining limited exposure on radio stations in local markets. I've often wished I could use the internet and/or traditional broadcast mediums to share my music, and that of other bands, with those who would be interested in listening.

I've contributed to the creation of over 100 original songs, with two or three making it as far as air play on the local radio station.

I've been playing local performances for 15 years, and currently play out live about once a month. I've created independent recording labels for the bands I've been in, and worked to get songs/albums in the hands of on-air talent for radio stations.

Like a lot of other local musicians, when I first started trying to get air play for my music, I was surprised by the lack of interest in not just my music, but in local music in general. After 15 years, my initial disillusionment has evolved into a more resigned acceptance of the fact that radio stations are a business, and have to make money.

One local station, (KXRK) has supported local artists via a 2hr show on Sundays for several years now. This is perhaps the best example of support from the stations in our market. Few others even allow local music on the air at any time.

I understand that from a fiscal perspective, it makes much more sense for a station to focus on national artists, who are supported by marketing campaigns at their labels. However, I believe that local music suffers from unfair competition verses national artists and large recording labels; particularly, the perks and incentives offered by Independent Record Promoters (often in the form of cold hard cash). The FCC and other government agencies that are responsible for policing the industry and keeping it free from 'payola', have not resolved this problem.

I believe the FCC needs to create a system whereby national-focused, and local-focused stations can co-exist in the same market. Either by reserving specific portions of the broadcast spectrum to national or local stations, or by relaxing regulations on low-power broadcasts, or some other means...

I believe that local markets will want at least some "national" content. They will also want "local" content. I believe there are more than one way to achieve the optimal mix of national/local content for listeners.

I believe the FCC must make sure that neither national nor local content dominate any market so completely so as to exclude the other. The current trend of national companies (Clear Channel) extending their dominance in local markets is not healthy, and any system devised by the FCC should include checks and balances to ensure that no business is able to monopolize any given market.

If the FCC truly wants to foster equity in local broadcast markets, then all genres of entertainment and communications should be considered when attempting to define 'local'.

To date, in my opinion, content in my local market has been adequately balanced (local vs national) in respect to the genres of "News" and "Public Affairs". However, there has been a marked imbalance of content in respect

to the genres of "Music" and "Entertainment", heavily favoring national content, to the exclusion of most local content.

Station participation in local community activities or sponsoring fundraisers should just be considered an example of the same type of community goodwill that many banks, corporations and local businesses also engage in. It should not count towards their localism requirement, unless they have specific examples of local music or entertainment included as part of the broadcasts.

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I agree with the JOINT STATEMENT ON CURRENT ISSUES IN RADIO delivered to Congress and the FCC in October of 2003, specifically that payments made to radio stations via "indie promoters" should be considered payola. The FCC should regulate the practice by prohibiting the proactive acceptance of any payments from anybody that does music research, or makes programming suggestions.

Free concerts should not necessarily be considered payola. Record labels should be allowed to buy ad spots on stations as an announced ad. Front and back announcing, or any preferential treatment given to an artist/label/promoter that is not disclosed publicly, should be prohibited.

Voice tracking or any practice which can mis-lead audiences about the source or intent of the broadcast should be prohibited. Voice tracking with adequate notice on-air to the public about the fact that it is not live should be permitted, and the market should be allowed to decide if it wishes to patronize that station.

Any practice which shifts the management of a local station to those who are not members of that local community should be considered detrimental to the connection to the local community.

National playlists have a place in the local market, but need to be clearly identified for what they are. National Top 40 lists, and countdowns are good. Playlists that are handed down from the corporate office to the local manager and passed off as a product of the local community are bad.

The FCC does not need to require a certain percentage of local/national programming. It should, however, require stations to clearly identify to their audience the nature of the programming. No national/regional programming should be allowed to be presented as if it were local (and vice versa). There is currently too much deception in this regard in radio programming.

Low Power FM is a great idea that needs more support. The FCC should create incentives for large media companies to foster LPFM stations in local markets.

Please consider the following ideas:

- partner LPFM stations with larger stations and allow certain interactions to count toward localism requirements.

- create a "Farm League" of LPFM stations that help develop young talent (on-air, musicians, etc...)

- Reduce the barriers to entry so that independent musicians, and aspiring jocks could easily start up their own LPFM stations.

Thanks for your consideration to these issues. I look forward to seeing the FCC provide more leadership in this important area of broadcast media.